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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/497,515	02/04/2000	Shuji Hitomi	Q57834	7579

7590 05/18/2005
Sughrue Mion Zinn MacPeak & Seas PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20037

EXAMINER

MERCADO, JULIAN A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1745

DATE MAILED: 05/18/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/497,515	Applicant(s) HITOMI, SHUJI	
	Examiner Julian Mercado	Art Unit 1745	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 February 2005.
2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 and 6-20 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-20 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3 and 6-10 is/are rejected.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

2e

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on February 7, 2005 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 103

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1, 3, 6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Fukuoka et al. (U.S. Pat. 5,723,173).

The rejection is maintained for the reasons of record as set forth in prior Office action sent October 5, 2004. The examiner notes applicant's amendment which recites that the porous

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polymer does not substantially have an ion-exchange function. This amendment also appears to be the same amendment, if not an identical amendment, to that filed on January 5, 2005, which was fully considered by the examiner and would have been entered into the record had applicant filed a Notice of Appeal and an Appeal Brief. See the Advisory Action sent January 14, 2005.

As to the porous polymer substantially not having an ion-exchange function, the examiner maintains that as the polymer in Fukuoka et al. is identical to that disclosed and claimed by applicant to the extent that it is a fluorocarbon polymer in a fuel cell electrode, it would naturally flow to inherently have no ion-exchange function as claimed, absent of a showing by applicant that the claimed invention distinguishes over the reference. *In re Best*, 195 USPQ at 433, footnote 4 (CCPA 1977) and *In re Spada*, 15 USPQ 2d 1655 (Fed. Cir. 1990) The examiner's reasoning that an electrode has no ion-exchange function has been established throughout the prosecution of the instant application in the prior discussion of Samuels et al. and Mussell et al.; see Office action sent April 13, 2004 on page 3, and Office action sent February 14, 2002 on page 5, respectively.

Applicant submits that the instant porous polymer is "distinct from the solid polymer electrolyte." (emphasis in original) In reply, the examiner maintains that Fukuoka et al. teaches a solid polymer electrolyte distinct from a porous polymer. The patentees teach a solid polymer electrolyte [10], e.g. a Nafion polymer, and a porous polymer [11], e.g. a PTFE fluorocarbon. (see col. 28-43) Note that the solid polymer electrolyte [10] is also coextensive with the catalyst layer [2] as shown by porous polymer [5], which is a hydrated extension of the solid polymer electrolyte layer, which resides in the pores defined by the catalyst particles and porous to the

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extent that gas channels [7] are present at the interface with the membrane electrolyte. (col. 4 line 56-62, col. 5 line 28-43, see Figure 2)

Applicant submits that in the October 5, 2004 Office action, the Office has acknowledged that the solid polymer electrolyte [5] *has* an ion-exchange function. (emphasis added) Applicant appears to have misunderstood the statement made in the Office action, as the porous polymer in Fukuoka et al. was asserted to have *no* ion-exchange function (emphasis added, see the Office action on page 4). The basis for which the porous polymer is considered to inherently possess no ion-exchange function are maintained for the reasons set forth in the prior Office action and set forth in this Office action in view of the present amendment to the claims.

Claims 7-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukuoka et al. as applied to claims 1, 3, 6 and 10 above.

The rejection is maintained for the reasons of record. The examiner notes that no salient arguments were presented against this ground of rejection.

Conclusion

All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the application prior to the entry of the submission under 37 CFR 1.114 and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the application prior to entry under 37 CFR 1.114. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action after the filing of a request for continued examination and the submission under 37 CFR 1.114.

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See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Julian Mercado whose telephone number is (571) 272-1289. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick J. Ryan, can be reached on (571) 272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.

A handwritten signature, possibly reading "J. Am", enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

GREGG CANTELMO
PRIMARY EXAMINER